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SUBJECT: MEETING WITH INSPECTOR GENERAL MAYA

Classified By: DCM Milton K. Drucker, Reasons: 1.4 B & D.

¶1. (C) Summary: Inspector General (Procurador General) Edgardo Maya told poloff on February 1 that he expected the Constitutional Court to affirm the legality of the Justice and Peace law. In Maya's opinion, President Uribe was breaking campaign rules in order to provoke opposition criticism and subsequently play the "victim" card. A long-time member of the Officialist Liberal Party (PLC), Maya predicted former President and party head Cesar Gaviria would not make a last minute attempt to challenge Uribe in May. End Summary.

¶2. (C) In a lunch meeting with poloff on February 1, Inspector General Edgardo Maya Villazon said he expected the Constitutional Court to uphold the Justice and Peace Law. Maya said his office would submit a brief to the court in favor of striking down the law, but admitted that the court would approve the law for "political reasons." He continued that since the Court had approved the reform to allow reelection, it would have no choice but to bless the law, which many viewed as a pillar of the Uribe Presidency.

¶3. (C) Maya said President Uribe was regularly breaking campaign rules as established in the Electoral Guarantees Law, in particular in his use of state assets (such as the Presidential Palace) and the TV transmission of weekend community councils. According to Maya, Uribe was doing so in order to provoke opposition outcry and then turn the tables by playing the "victim card." Regarding transmission of the President's most recent community council event by two cable TV channels, Maya said the Administration gave the entire feed, allegedly filmed by GOC camera operators using GOC equipment, directly to the stations, in violation of prohibitions on using state assets to promote reelection. He nevertheless admitted that the entities charged with investigating electoral complaints were notoriously slow and extremely unlikely to overturn a presidential election result.

¶4. (C) Regarding the Presidential contest, Maya felt certain of an Uribe victory. However, he quipped that this would be Colombia's first and last immediate reelection, arguing that the public would soon grow tired of Uribe's "heavy-handed style." A long-time member of the Liberal Party, Maya doubted that former President and current party head Cesar Gaviria would enter the contest at the last minute, as some commentators have speculated.

¶5. (C) Comment: Maya is an adamant political foe of Uribe, and he continues to show it both publicly and privately. He

is a regular spokesman for leading political heavyweights in the anti-Uribe camp. He had asked the Constitutional Court to overturn reelection and was handily shot down. His comments need to be viewed in that light. However, his observation that Justice and Peace will almost certainly be upheld by the Court is noteworthy. End Comment.

¶6. (C) Biographical notes: Maya has publicly supported Plan Colombia activities and in particular aerial fumigation, including in national parks. He has been critical, however, of the extension of full immunity to U.S. military personnel assigned to Colombia. A native of Valledupar, Maya is the first Inspector General to be selected by the Senate for a second term. He is the widower of former GOC Culture Minister Consuelo Araujo, who was kidnapped and killed by the FARC during the Pastrana Administration. He is the step-father of current Cesar Governor Hernando Molina (Araujo's son by an earlier marriage).
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